

CAMPAIGN FINANCE DIVISION

☒ WAIVER REQUEST
☐ RECONSIDERATION REQUEST

DATE: 1/24/2022

DOCKET#: 2022-072

FILER INFORMATION

Name: Carla Sigler
Office: City Judge, City Court, City of Sulphur
Parish: CALCASIEU
Election Date: 11/3/2020
Level of Office: District

REPORT INFORMATION

Name of Report: 10-G
Original Due Date: 11/25/2020
Date Filed: 12/3/2020
Activity Receipts: \$30,612.87
Expenditures: \$-0
Funds at Close of Reporting Period: \$30,612.87

LATE FEE INFORMATION

Amount of Late Fee: \$480
Days Late: 8
Late Fee Order Received: 3/1/2021
Payment/Waiver Request Due Date: 3/22/2021
Waiver Request Received: 3/18/2021 (Postmarked Certified Mail)
Additional Information Requested:

- Medical
- Financial
- Other

COMMENTS: Two hurricanes, Hurricane Laura (August 27, 2020) and Hurricane Delta (October 10, 2020) hit my election area of Sulphur, Louisiana within six weeks of each other, and we have been in the midst of pandemic, so to say that it was the most challenging campaign environment possible would be an understatement. She decided to hire an experience and reputable accountant with campaign finance experience. As soon as she received the late notice letter, within minutes she contacted Mr. Foolkes about it. Mr. Foolkes informed them that he did not know that this report was due because they had no additional expenditures to report. She believes that he filed the overdue report the very next day after we received the letter. We also were improperly advised by Mr. Foolkes that the campaign expenditures we made were tax deductible, only to recently learn from our business accountant that this is not the case. Thus, they are out many tens of thousands of dollars they will never see again, have continuing hurricane repair expenses not covered by insurance in the tens of thousands of dollars as well, and are just getting the law firm back up to a respectable level of business. Even a fine of \$480.00 is a difficult burden for us given everything we have been through in a brutal and unsuccessful campaign.

OTHER LATE FEE INFORMATION

Campaign Finance:

Other Outstanding Reports: No
Other Outstanding Late Fees: No
Prior Late Fees: No
Reassessed Late Fees: No

Disclosure Statements:

Other Outstanding Late Fees: No
Prior Late Fees: No



BRYANT & SIGLER

Attorneys at Law

Justice You Can Trust

March 18, 2021

Ms. Melissa Horn
Program Compliance Officer
State of Louisiana
Department of State Civil Service
Louisiana Board of Ethics
P.O. Box 4368
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Sent via certified mail 70180360000213322767
and email to melissa.horn@la.gov

Re: Late fee assessment for the November 3, 2020
for Ms. Carla Sigler

Dear Ms. Horn:

This letter is my request for a waiver of the late fee assessment for the November 3, 2020 election campaign. Please note that the Ethics Board letter did not reach anyone by certified mail return receipt delivery where we signed for these letters, and I received it in my mailbox on or about February 27, 2021. There has been some continuing difficulty with certified mail delivery since the two hurricanes.

I respectfully request a waiver of the late fee assessment for my November 3, 2020 election.

Two hurricanes, Hurricane Laura (August 27, 2020) and Hurricane Delta (October 10, 2020) hit my election area of Sulphur, Louisiana within six weeks of each other, and we have been in the midst of pandemic, so to say that it was the most challenging campaign environment possible would be an understatement.

I had never run for political office before this election, so when I decided to run for Sulphur City Court judge I knew that while running a private law practice and managing numerous work and family responsibilities, I would need expert assistance to manage campaign finance responsibilities. My husband Brent Collins and I (we also got married during this campaign in my parents' backyard due to COVID-19 concerns) decided to hire an experienced and reputable accountant with campaign finance experience, Mr. Alan Foolkes of the local accounting firm McMullen and Mancuso in Sulphur, Louisiana. All reports were filed by him after we submitted all requested data to him with ample time for reports to be filed.



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My husband and I also founded a free legal clinic to serve local people after the hurricanes, the Southwest Louisiana Disaster Recovery Clinic, which is a 501C3, and ran it both during and after this campaign. We were able to assist literally hundreds of people with important disaster-related legal matters, and even trained other local lawyers who assisted in running this clinic for months at two separate locations in Calcasieu Parish.

My office building and home suffered substantial damages, which we were also repairing in the midst of helping others. (Unfortunately, as with so many others here in Southwest Louisiana, those repairs continue, and our damages have worsened since February's ice storm). My parents were undergoing serious health concerns at the time, all while still attempting to help my husband and me walk the campaign territory in an area still so devastated by two hurricanes that street signs are still missing all these months later.

I say this so that it is clear that under no circumstances did my husband or myself consider ourselves equipped to navigate the campaign finance area on our own even before all these developments---we certainly did not feel capable of handling these matters in the midst of all these challenges.

As an attorney, I am used to equipping an expert with the information he or she requires and then having them assist me with what I need. I am truly sorry that Mr. Foolkes did not file this last report on time. It is somewhat ironic since as a former prosecutor who specializes in Appeals, the most deadline-intensive form of legal practice, I am well-known here for being a stickler for the rules and deadlines.

As soon as I received the late notice letter, within minutes I texted and called Mr. Foolkes about it. It was a shock to me and my husband, since my husband repeatedly checked in with him to ensure that all reports had been filed. Mr. Foolkes informed us that he did not know that this report was due because we had no additional expenditures to report. I believed that he filed the overdue report the very next day after we received the letter.

I also sent an email inquiry to Mr. Foolkes asking him for assistance responding to this letter, and I did not receive much advice from him. He is a nice man, but I believe like so many of us here he is experiencing the most challenging time possible. This election season was no exception. I would not wish a two-hurricane, pandemic campaign on anyone.

From a practical standpoint, my husband and I self-financed nearly the entirety of our campaign, which seemed like the right thing to do in any event since many lost all they had in the two hurricanes. Financially this was an extreme hardship, as my law firm, like any small business here, has suffered greatly not just from COVID-19, but also due to two hurricanes.



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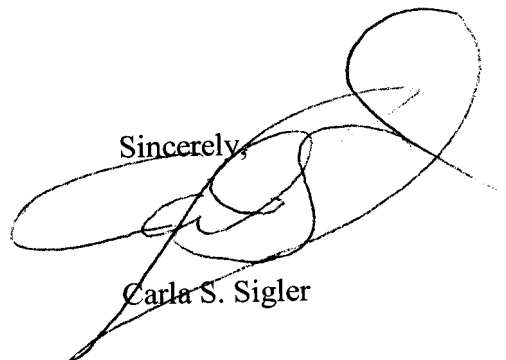
We also were improperly advised by Mr. Foolkes that the campaign expenditures we made were tax deductible, only to recently learn from our business accountant that this is not the case. Thus, we are out many tens of thousands of dollars we will never see again, have continuing hurricane repair expenses not covered by insurance in the tens of thousands of dollars as well, and are just getting the law firm back up to a respectable level of business. Even a fine of \$480.00 is a difficult burden for us given everything we have been through in a brutal and unsuccessful campaign.

In reviewing the campaign bank statements, it does appear that there was absolutely no campaign expenditure made between the last report filed and the report that was overdue. Our last expenditure was on October 28, 2020. Since there was nothing additional to report on the late-filed November report, it does not appear that any expenditures were not accounted for on the day that the report was actually due.

I know that I am responsible for the late filing, but I hired someone whom I believed would ensure that my campaign complied with all finance requirements, including the filing of this late report. I respectfully request a waiver of this late fee assessment.

If anything further is needed from me, please do not hesitate to contact me. I truly appreciate your professional courtesies and assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,



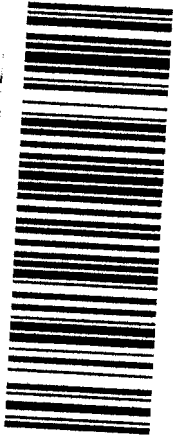
Carla S. Sigler

Carla S. Sigler
1827 Ryan Street
Lake Charles, LA 70601

U.S. POSTAGE PAID
FCM, LETTER
LAKE CHARLES, LA
70601
MAR 18, 21
AMOUNT

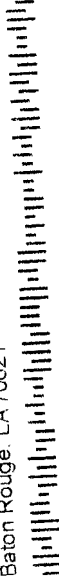
\$7.00

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Ms. Melissa Horn
Program Compliance Officer
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P.O. Box 4368
Baton Rouge, LA 70821



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